

389 millions, in an area of 1.58 million square miles, so that the density was 246. India and Pakistan completed their first census as independent countries early in 1951, and definite information is not yet available. But, if we may accept preliminary reports, there has been another huge increase, in Hindu India alone amounting to 42 millions. (See *The Times* of April 16th, 1951.)

As usually happens, the high birth-rate is accompanied by a high, though not so high, death-rate. The author remarks, "What stands out is the fact that before 1920 India had a death-rate somewhere between forty and fifty per 1,000, and that after that it underwent a remarkable decline," to about thirty-one in fact, with an expectation of life at birth of about thirty-two years. The increase in population growth is almost entirely due to decrease in mortality. The author says that in the past there were "three great gains in the fight against death. The first of these was the reduction of war and banditry under British rule. The second was the control of famines. And the third was the control of epidemic disease." He holds the sensible view that, whilst a reduction of mortality is desirable and possible, this would produce an increase in the already too-large population, if not accompanied by social changes, resulting in a reduction in the birth-rate. The high birth-rate is the crux of the matter.

The main problem is how to reduce the pressure of population and, at the same time, improve the standard of living. There are, clearly, three possible remedies to be considered, namely, mass migration; increased industrialization; and birth control. The first, mass migration, could not be carried out on any scale sufficient to improve the condition of those remaining and, in any case, it would be a palliative and not a cure; the numbers would soon fill up again.

But increased industrialization, which the author defines as the application of mechanical power to manufacture and transport, offers some hope of bettering the conditions of life. Such an increase of industrialization would result in the improved production of materials and manufactured goods, including

those for export. Not everyone will agree with the author's brief historical summary of the subject, and it can be imagined that a retired British member of the I.C.S. would treat the matter differently. But the author obviously tries to be fair, and his account of this difficult subject is well worth reading. The peninsula has natural resources of value and, no doubt, the two governments concerned will do their best to develop these.

But the most pressing question is that of birth control, with the intention of reducing the present huge annual increase of population, and on this pressing question the author has some remarks which are much to the point. He says, the "strange view that the purpose of life is to sweat and strain in order that the maximum number may be supported is completely at variance with the goal of a higher standard of life," and, "the logical approach to improving the Indian living standard would . . . be to slow down the growth rate." It is known that this attitude has the approval of the Indian Prime Minister, who has said that the State should encourage birth control and family planning.

The book is an important contribution to the study of questions of no small consequence for the future of a large section of the human race, and all who value human quality rather than quantity will be glad to have the Indian problem put so clearly before them.

C. F. ARDEN-CLOSE.

PSYCHIATRY

Wortis, Joseph. *Soviet Psychiatry*. Baltimore, 1950. Williams and Wilkins. Pp. 314. Price 38s. 6d.

THE author of this book, who is an Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychiatry in New York, is the son of a Russian, but did not have the advantage of learning Russian in childhood and has never visited Russia. His knowledge of the subject of his book is therefore entirely derived from what he has read: with the help of a Russian research assistant he accumulated over 7,000 abstracts and digests of neuropsychiatric articles and books. The risks of such a basis for evaluating or even

describing contemporary Russian psychiatry are obvious. Dr. Wortis has partly disarmed criticism on this score by avowing his deficiency and explaining that he approaches Soviet psychiatry "in a spirit of sympathetic interest." Throughout the book sympathetic interest is indeed apparent, evidently precluding sharp criticism or frank reference to the more painful aspects of scientific development in the U.S.S.R. Thus the Lysenko affair and its aftermath are very briefly alluded to, in a mildly white-washing style. Since psychology has had a rougher passage than psychiatry, and both are, of course, much influenced by the aspects which dialectical materialism has worn during the different phases of political orthodoxy in Russia, it is appropriate that the first two chapters of the book are devoted respectively to "Dialectical Materialism in Psychiatry" and "The Fight for Soviet Psychology." Another introductory chapter deals with Pavlov and his school, the influence of which according to Dr. Wortis has led to the "general strengthening of experimental and medical tradition in Soviet psychiatry, which provides a basis of verifiable fact for much of its clinical theory and practice." In ensuing chapters this assertion is scarcely confirmed. Social and political theory seem to have had far more than experiment or medicine to do with the matters covered in such chapters as "The Organization of Psychiatric Care," "Child Psychiatry," "Psycho-analysis and Psychotherapy," "The Importance of Work," "Education and Research," and "Psychiatry, Morality and the Law." Nor, indeed (except in regard to individual psychotherapy and psychoanalysis) do the conceptions outlined differ substantially from those put forward in our own textbooks, though it is of course impossible to know whether the extent to which various admirable doctrines are put into practice in the U.S.S.R. is greater or less than in Western Europe and America. This applies to the sparse passages dealing with eugenic measures. It is said in them that the importance of heredity, though recognized, is never heavily stressed; that sterilization is not practised; that workers are encouraged

to visit consultation centres for scientific information on matters of heredity, and that the performance of abortion is allowed only in cases where the continuation of pregnancy endangers the health of the mother and when a serious disease of the parent can be inherited. There is no reference to the drastic change of attitude towards the work of Levitt and Müller.

There does not appear to have been any serious Russian contribution to the advancement of psychiatry through laboratory or clinical experiment, but social measures aimed both at prevention and treatment have naturally been extensive. Of interest here is the system of guardianship and patronage whereby, through the psychiatric dispensaries, the material and recreational needs of mentally incompetent persons, living in their own homes, can be assisted by subsidies.

This book is of value as a conspectus and digest of the large Russian literature on psychiatry and related topics hitherto unavailable to Western readers. It affords little help in sifting this literature and appraising what it reports.

HILDA LEWIS.

PSYCHOLOGY

Allport, Gordon W. *The Individual and His Religion*. London, 1951. Constable. Pp. xiii + 163. Price 12s. 6d.

WHAT light can psychology throw on the problem of religious belief? Why does one man believe in the existence of God and another not? By what processes of mind does a person acquire faith? These are some of the questions raised by Professor Allport (he is Professor of Psychology at Harvard) in a lucid, interesting and most admirably written book.

Allport makes it clear that psychology cannot, nor indeed does it claim to, tell us anything about the objective validity or otherwise of the religious sentiment. But he has a profound respect for the point of view of the believer. He pooh-poohs the idea that religious feeling is in any way irrational or "escapist." "If we say that the intelligibilities of religious people leap far ahead of